

*June 14, 2004*

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"I hope that when you're my age you'll be able to say, as I have been able to say: we lived in freedom; we lived lives that were a statement, not an apology."*  
--- Ronald Reagan

## AROUND THE STATE

### \*\*\*Honoring Ronald Reagan\*\*\*

I did not have a better idea than Governor Schwarzenegger's Proclamation to honor Ronald Reagan, which reduced state offices to skeleton crews last Friday. However, I must admit that to honor a President and Governor who railed against waste in government by paying government workers for extra time off is, at the very least, ironic.

My second thought was remembering my father's advice to Governor Reagan when he served as a Reagan appointee to the California Highway Commission. Dad said that Cal Trans would probably get more transportation projects built if half the department was sent home with pay. Perhaps Governor Schwarzenegger, with thanks to Ronald Reagan, is belatedly implementing this advice.

My third thought was also not mine originally. A thoughtful commentator on the state budget suggested that Governor Schwarzenegger, again with a nod to Ronald Reagan, has found a way for state employees to self-identify themselves as either "essential," which means that they worked last Friday, or "non-essential," which means they may end up on that layoff list now buried in the Department of Finance.

### \*\*\*Summer Study Assignment\*\*\*

Summer is upon us and you thought studying was over for a few months. Wrong! You have 20 weeks to study up on 14 ballot measures before the exam on election day, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. You may not know anything about them now, but my guess is that you will be tired of hearing about some of them even before the World Series starts.

The 13 measures come in the form of three legislative bills, nine initiatives and one referendum. Three are bond measures: high speed rail, \$9.95 billion; children's hospitals, \$750 million; and stem cell research, \$3 billion. Two ask for tax increases: one seeks higher income taxes to pay for mental health services, and the other institutes a new "telephone tax" to fund emergency and medical services. The referendum seeks to overturn the health care mandate on small businesses that was passed last year by the

Legislature. There are two measures about Indian gaming and one that would effectively undermine California's Three Strikes law.

As of this writing, there were still 28 measures circulating for enough signatures to make it to the ballot and another four being reviewed by the Attorney General's office. Plus, the legislature could still add more to the ballot before they finish for the summer. To begin your study so you are ready for election day, visit [http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_j.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_j.htm)

### **\*\*\*Our Governor's Faith\*\*\***

One of the most touching aspect of honoring Ronald Reagan last week was seeing and hearing how many public officials react to matters of faith. Those for whom faith is a motivating factor in their lives put the spiritual touches on their decisions and actions every day, but unless one is looking for it, that inspired leadership may go unnoticed. As Governor Schwarzenegger addressed the California Prayer Breakfast last Wednesday, it was impossible for his faith to remain unnoticed. I want to share with you some of the words he spoke at the breakfast to let you know that in addition to a man of action, you have a man of faith leading our state. He remembered his experience being raised Catholic and attending church schools. He said,

"All of those things had a big impact on me growing up. I learned faith and discipline from the church, but I also learned faith and discipline from my parents. My parents did not allow me to just hang out, or to just watch things be done. They wanted me to be responsible, always be active. My father, especially, always was asking me, every day, 'What were you doing today? What did you accomplish?' ....It didn't matter really what it was, he just wanted me to create something, build something, invent something, or do something. It didn't matter what it was, if it was just building a little whistle from a wood stick, or if it was studying, creating a kite from scratch, or going to school, or doing homework, or doing sports... He wanted me to be active, and to grow and develop myself, because he wanted me to have faith in God, but he also wanted me to have faith in myself. He always said it was God who gave me my body and my mind, but it was now up to me to achieve 100 percent of my potential. And he always would say it's criminal for people not to achieve 100 percent of their potential."

The Governor did not go on to talk about achieving his potential in terms of his political work. Rather, he focused on instilling the same values in his children. He spoke highly of his wife and her abilities as well as of her parents and their faith. He talked about teaching his own children to read the Bible daily, do well in school, complete their chores and be physically active. In doing all of that, our Governor gives an example of faith in action and reminds us that we uplift each other in our efforts to reach our divine potential.

## **ISSUE FOCUS**

### **\*\*\* More Algebra and a Correction \*\*\***

Last week, I posted a couple of easy sample algebra problems from California's High School Exit Exam. Many of you found the second problem to be insurmountable. I applaud the great effort to solve the problem, but the reason it was so difficult is because I misprinted the question. I neglected to surround "Y+2" with the absolute value symbol as it looks below:

$$|Y+2| = 9$$

- A.  $\{-11, 7\}$
- B.  $\{-7, 7\}$
- C.  $\{-7, 11\}$
- D.  $\{-11, 11\}$

Thus, the correct answer is 'A'.

I maintain that California's high school seniors should be able to solve basic algebra problems. Thousands of students have successfully graduated without knowing basic algebra because the state is granting waivers to just about anyone who asks. We should all be very disappointed that we are short-changing students this way. To me, it is the bigotry of soft expectations that claims that these problems are too tough for California students. We are a great state and a great people -- our students are more than capable of handling this subject.

You be the judge. Here are a few more questions from the sample test. (Answers follow):

Q1: In a certain room, the number of chairs,  $c$ , is equal to 3 times the number of tables,  $t$ .

Which equation matches the information? (The symbol  $x$  in this case represents the multiplication function.)

- A.  $3 \times c = t$
- B.  $3 \times t = c$
- C.  $3 \times c = 3 \times t$
- D.  $c \times t = 3$

Q2: A shopkeeper has  $x$  kilograms of tea in stock. He sells 15 kilograms and then receives a new shipment weighing  $2y$  kilograms. Which expression represents the weight of the tea he now has?

- A.  $x - 15 - 2y$
- B.  $x + 15 + 2y$
- C.  $x + 15 - 2y$
- D.  $x - 15 + 2y$

Answers: Q1: B, Q2: D

## **BOE AND LEGISLATIVE DATES**

**June 14, 2004** --- Flag Day

**June 15, 2004** --- Budget bill must be passed by midnight

**June 15, 2004** --- Quarterly due date for estimated income taxes

**June 15-17, 2004** --- BoE meeting in Culver City

**June 19, 2004** --- Juneteenth Celebration of the historic time in 1865 that slaves in Texas received the word that President Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863 making them free.

**June 20, 2004** --- Father's Day (Thanks Dad, for always being there.)

**June 24, 2004** --- Deadline for submission of legislative measures to November ballot.

**July 2, 2004** --- Legislature's summer recess begins, providing a budget bill has been enacted.

## **NOTABLE DATES/ HISTORY**

**June 14, 1775** --- U.S. Army founded

**June 14, 1846** --- California (Bear Flag) Republic proclaimed in Sonoma

**June 14, 1954** --- President Eisenhower signed order adding words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance

**June 15, 1215** --- King John signed the Magna Carta at Runnymede, England

**June 15, 1775** --- George Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the American Army

**June 15, 1864** --- Robert E. Lee's home area (Arlington, VA) became a military cemetery

**June 15, 1989** --- Ronald Reagan was knighted by Queen Elizabeth

**June 16, 1858** --- Abraham Lincoln accepted the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in Illinois

**June 17, 1579** --- Sir Francis Drake landed on the coast of California

**June 17, 1885** --- Statue of Liberty arrived in New York City aboard French ship “Isere”

**June 17, 1982** -- President Reagan delivered his first U.N. General Assembly address in which he called the Soviet Union “the evil empire”

**June 18, 1812** --- War of 1812 began as U.S. declared war against Britain

**June 19, 1778** --- Washington's troops finally left Valley Forge

**June 20, 1782** --- Congress approved the Great Seal of U.S. and named the eagle as the country's symbol

**June 20, 1944** --- Congress chartered Central Intelligence Agency

## **GENERAL TAX INFORMATION**

For answers to your general tax questions, call the Board of Equalization information center. Customer service representatives are available to help you from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific time, Monday through Friday (except state holidays).

Toll-free number: 800-400-7115  
TDD service for the hearing impaired  
TDD phones: 800-735-2929  
Voice phones: 800-735-2922

To reach the Taxpayer Rights Advocate's office for assistance with any BOE issues, see <http://www.boe.ca.gov/tra/tra.htm>, or call toll-free 1-888-324-2798.

## **HOW TO CONTACT ME**

Bill Leonard  
Board of Equalization  
400 Capitol Mall, Suite 2340  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Telephone: (916) 445-2181  
Fax: (916) 327-4003

Email: [bill.leonard@boe.ca.gov](mailto:bill.leonard@boe.ca.gov)